The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective and Identity Theory

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Abstract

Symbolic interactionist perspectives or frames underlie most sociological interest in identity. We focus first on the presentation of these perspectives, beginning with the eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosophers and the later work of the philosopher-psychologist George Herbert Mead, tracing their influence on current sociological thinking about social psychology and identity. Two important variants in symbolic interactionist thinking, "traditional symbolic interactionism" and "structural symbolic interactionism," share fundamentals but exhibit significant variation making for differences in utilities. The essay then focuses on a structural interactionist frame and issues of identity emergent from that frame. The evaluation of a frame rests traditionally on its capacity to serve as supplier of images, assumptions, and concepts used to develop testable theories. That structural symbolic interactionism has this capacity is evidenced in discussions of identity theory, affect control theory, and identity control theory incorporating empirical tests. A second criterion for judging the utility of a frame rests on its capacity to bridge to alternative frames. Discussions of the reciprocal relation of structural symbolic interaction and frames and theories in cognitive social psychology, personality psychology, self-esteem theory, and the social psychology of organizations illustrate that value.

Symbolic interactionist perspectives or frames underlie most sociological interest in the study of identity. We focus first on the presentation of these frames, arbitrarily but usefully beginning with their origin in the writings of Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, and David Hume, eighteenth-century moral philosophers (Bryson, 1945).[1] While referencing briefly intermediate sources, we pay particular attention to the philosopher-psychologist George Herbert Mead (1934), whose work in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries greatly influenced contemporary sociological thinking about social

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psychological matters, especially self and identity.

Two important variants in current symbolic interactionist thinking, "traditional" and "structural," draw on these sources, but also exhibit significant variation. In common, they stress the import of subjective experience to human social behavior, and they view society as an outgrowth of interaction, society as basic to the development of self, and self-concepts as guiding social behavior. They differ in their views of attributes of social process and interaction, the nature of society, selves and identities, and the extent to which human social behavior can be understood without seriously invoking the concept of social structure. These differences make for differences in foci, styles of work, and utilities. We then narrow our attention to the structural interactionist frame and addresses issues of identity emergent from that frame.

Perspectives or frames are not theories, if the term theory is taken to mean arguments proposing a tentative explanation of some phenomenon or phenomena capable of evaluation through empirical research. The evaluation of frames rests traditionally on their capacity to serve as the supplier of images, assumptions, and concepts used to develop testable explanations. Evidence that structural symbolic interactionism has that capability is presented through a presentation of identity theory (S. Stryker, 1980) and limited presentations of identity control theory (Burke, 1991) and affect control theory (Heise, 1979). The discussion testifies to the fertility of the structural interactionist frame as well as the empirical soundness of theories developed from that frame.

S. Stryker (2008) has suggested a second criterion for judging the utility of a perspective or frame: the ability of a frame and derived theory to serve as a bridge linking to alternative frames and theories. Pursuing this observation with respect to the capacities of the structural interactionist frame and identity theory constitutes the remainder of this chapter.

The Symbolic Interactionist Frame: Philosophic Backdrop and Early Sociological Development

The label, "symbolic interactionism," is of comparatively recent vintage, having been invented by Herbert Blumer (1937, 1969) to describe ideas he attributes largely to Mead (1934) and developed mainly at the University of Chicago after World War I. As noted, the origin of the ideas themselves can be traced to the Scottish moral philosophers whose arguments anticipate many to which Blumer attached the label. In particular, these philosophers asserted that the state of human nature is a social state; that society is constituted by communication, social relationships, and interaction based on sociability and sympathy; and that society is a mirror in which people see themselves. The symbolic interactionist frame builds on the premise that in the beginning there is society (S. Stryker, 1977), a stance rooted in the writings of the Scottish moral philosophers.

However, a number of others—philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists—who were either predecessors or contemporaries of Mead contributed to the evolving social psychology represented in his work and labeled symbolic interactionism. William James' (1890) analyses of self-esteem and of consciousness have been well-known to sociologists since their appearance, but only the latter entered early symbolic interactionist thinking. Consciousness, for James, reflected human experiences; both are continuous processes. Self, defined as all that persons can call their own, emerges from consciousness, and includes the self as knower (the "I") and as known (the "Me"). He distinguished four types of self, one of which, the social self, has an empirical source in the recognition accorded to persons by others. He argued that persons have multiple social selves, as many as there are individuals who recognize them. Further, he asserted that, since individuals fall into classes, for practical purposes persons have as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of others about whose opinions they care (James, 1890).

Thus, James viewed self as multifaceted and a product of heterogeneous society, ideas of strategic significance in contemporary structural symbolic interactionism.

Viewing human evolution as adaptation to environmental conditions, John Dewey (1930) argued that mind comes into being as persons act, individually or collectively, to resolve problems. Implicated in this argument is a pragmatic theory of action: ongoing activity is blocked, mind deliberates about and selects among alternative possibilities for removing the blockage, and activity continues when a successful solution is found.

A contemporary of Mead, Charles Horton Cooley (1902) believed the special concerns of sociology are the mental and subjective, suggesting that the solid facts of sociology consist in the imaginations people have of one another. These facts are to be discerned using sympathy and empathy to imagine the lives of others. Self is defined and developed in interaction, a product of a looking glass process involving impressions of how we appear to others, impressions of others' assessments of us, and our feelings of pride or shame deriving from these imaginations. He stressed the importance of primary groups defined by intimacy, face-to-face relations, and cooperation, since these shape the social nature and ideals of persons and are the source of more complex relationships. There are obvious correspondences between Cooley's discussion and the conception of relational self (see Chen et al., Chapter 7, this volume). The concept of "significant other(s)," central to discussions of relational self-theory and research, is too recent an invention to appear in Cooley's writings but is implicit in those writings.

W. I. Thomas' aphorism, "(I)f men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 572), asserted the importance of persons' definitions of the situation. That is, it is because the same objective circumstances in which persons find themselves often do not elicit the same adjustive responses that the subjective sense they have of situations must be taken into account to interpret or explain their behavior. However, for Thomas, subjective definitions of the situation are in themselves insufficient to understand social behavior. Rather, both the objective, verifiable situation and the situation as defined by persons and groups involved must jointly be considered.

Mead, influenced by Cooley and Dewey, creatively synthesized their jointly developed ideas, becoming the foremost philosophical precursor of symbolic interactionism. The synthesis drew on pragmatism and evolution, incorporated the idea that persons, as selves, determine their worlds, and pointed to Wilhelm Wundt's conception of gestures as the mechanisms allowing mind, self, and society to emerge from social interaction (Mead, 1934). Mind allowed humans to cooperate by manipulating significant symbols (significant symbols are by definition gestures that have common meaning for participants in interaction). Since humans need others to deal effectively with problems they have as collectivities, they must take others into account. They do this, Mead argued, by taking the attitude—for Mead, attitudes are plans of action—or role of the other[2] in order to anticipate others' responses and to coordinate their and others' behaviors. They also take the attitude of the other in order to think reflexively about themselves and to see themselves objectively. Indeed, Mead defined self as that which is an object to itself; and, as an object, self is an attitude or plan of action. Treating themselves as objects, humans can have conversations with and about themselves and their action plans.

For Mead, social process—equivalently social interaction—is primary, for society and self both emerge from social process. The basic dictum of Mead's social psychology derives from this stance: start with ongoing social process. Stated differently, in order to interact effectively within a group, the members must develop a generalized sense of how they are viewed by the group as an organized whole. One part of the self, the "I," represents the responses of persons to the expectations of the group. Mead treated the "I" as pure impulse, using it to discuss the spontaneity and creativity that he believed were intrinsic to human experience. The second part of self is

the "Me," a product of interaction within society. Mead visualized the two parts of self as in an ongoing dialectic relationship: while the self as "Me" is a product of society, the self as "I" continuously reacts to the society that shapes it. Such a society is never a fixed entity; it is always being created and recreated.

Three implications of Mead's thinking deserve explicit statement. First, societies undergo a constant process of institutionalization of solutions to collective problems, and societies undergo constant change as novel problems emerge in and from the social environments in which they exist. Second, both mind and self are intrinsically social phenomena because both come into being and can only exist in and through the process of communicating via significant symbols. Third, the model of social life underlying Mead's thought is provided by scientific method and the social actor is modeled on the scientist conducting an experiment. Such models of social life and social actor tend to neglect affect or emotion.

Contemporary Symbolic Interactionism: Major Variants, Commonalities, and Differences

The most influential voice shaping the meaning of symbolic interactionism from the mid-1930s to the 1970s—perhaps to the present—was Herbert Blumer's. The major counter-voice to Blumer in this period was that of Manford H. Kuhn. The former's work provides much of the content of current traditional symbolic interactionism; Kuhn's work represents a major early effort to define a structural symbolic interactionism.

Asserting that his symbolic interactionism represented Mead's ideas, Blumer (1969) argued that the pursuit of general theory is futile given the centrality of meanings, definitions, and interpretations of situations for social actions. Persons continuously construct their behavior anew in the course of activity itself. Consequently, the meanings and definitions that underlie social interaction also undergo continuous reformulation, and those applicable at one point in time will not be applicable at subsequent points in time. Blumer concluded that sociologists can achieve after-the-fact understandings of social behavior but cannot hope for theory-based explanations predicting behavior. He also rejected conventional numerical methods of sociological analysis, arguing that these fail to capture the meanings essential to understanding social interaction. Rather, he suggested using "exploration" of anything that allows research subjects to speak in their own voice, which includes listening to conversations, the use of what today are called focus groups, interviewing, reading life histories, letters, diaries, and public records. All such methods may be useful in subsequent "inspection," a process that looks to develop, test, and revise images, beliefs, and conceptions of what is seen in direct observation, by posing questions that challenge working conceptions and open the researcher to new and different perspectives. It seeks to uncover generic relationships, sharpen the reference of concepts, and form theoretical propositions. It is, said Blumer, a flexible, imaginative, creative procedure involving close, shifting examination of elements used for analysis, looking at these in different ways and with different questions in mind.

Labeling his frame "self-theory" to differentiate it from Blumer's vision of symbolic interactionism, Kuhn (1964, Kuhn & McPartland, 1954) aspired to provide precise, theory-based generalizations and their rigorous empirical test. Accepting the pragmatic position that social structure is created, maintained, and altered through symbolic interaction, he asserted that once created, structure constrains further interaction. He brought role and reference group (Merton, 1957; Merton & Kitt, 1950) ideas into his frame, and adopted the notions of social structure as composed of networks of positions in organized relations among persons and of role expectations as linked to those positions. Recognizing that the relations of expectations to behavior are loose, he saw greater determinancy in the relation of self to behavior. Taking Mead's views of self as an object and objects as attitudes or action plans, Kuhn argued that self is the most significant object to be defined in a situation, because to know an actor's self is to

have the best available index of the actor's future behavior.

The concept of core self, a set of stable self-meanings giving relative stability to personality, continuity to interaction, and predictability to behavior, is central to Kuhn's theorizing. However, he argued, the person's actions do not simply follow the dictates of the core self; rather, the role-taking process and the self-control made possible by that process allow for creativity in behavior. Nor are persons social automatons. The self, he suggests, is composed of a great variety of component parts—status identifications, role expectations, preferences and avoidances, personal attributes and traits, and patterns of selection of reference groups—that weaken links of social structure and self.[3]

Clearly, important issues separate the symbolic interactionisms of Blumer and Kuhn, but the two share a common foundation that begins with a view of society as a web of communication or interaction. Interaction proceeds via meanings developed in interaction itself. The term society summarizes that interaction. Social life is a dynamic flow of events involving multiple persons. Since both society and persons derive from social process, both take on meanings in and through interaction. Neither takes ontological precedence over the other: society as a web of interaction creates persons but the interaction of persons creates society. The symbolic capacity of human beings means they have minds; they think. Thinking about themselves, they develop self-conceptions about who and what they are—shaped by the social process and entering that process. Mind and self are responses to interruptions in activities that involve formulating and choosing among possible resolutions of the problems. These responses represent internal, subjective experience that enters subsequent behavior. Thus, to understand human behavior, sociology must incorporate a concern with the subjective experience of those it studies. Contained in this imagery is the idea that humans, both individually and collectively, are active and creative. Implied is that human behavior is to some extent indeterminate, since neither the course nor outcomes of interaction are completely predictable from conditions preceding that interaction. As noted, despite a common stance on some fundamentals, the traditional and the structural versions of symbolic interactionism differ with respect to a wide range of issues (Stryker & Vryan, 2003). Table 10.1 presents the major differences between the two perspectives.

The variation between the two interactionist perspectives has been posed in stark terms, historically accurate but appearing today less frequently in other than rhetorical argument. There is growing realization that "either–or" polar choices are not required. In principle, social life may be undetermined; still, both self and social structures do impact on behavior. Phenomenologies affect persons' behaviors, but in part these are rooted in social structure. Social construction and social reconstruction, as well as stability and change, are observable characteristics of social life; if so, general concepts can be useful and used to formulate and test general theory. Both quantitative and qualitative methods can be strategic in achieving this goal.

Yet, the past is reflected in current work based on the symbolic interactionist frame, and there are important differences in the current versions of the frames labeled traditional and social structural. The label "traditional" intends that variations it emphasizes follow in the footsteps of Blumer. The label "social structural" intends that its emphasis is on the role played by social structures in constraining and facilitating social psychological events and processes.

Traditional Symbolic Interactionism

This work generally is used to illustrate an existing concept or to present and illustrate a new concept seen as useful in understanding a situation of interaction under examination. Often, the situation examined is exotic, and is approached from the standpoint of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), that is, ideally without prior theory or conceptualization. Such work typically shows little interest in the generalizability of its

Table 10.1 Comparison of traditional and structural symbolic interactionism

Traditional symbolic interactionism	Structural symbolic interactionism
It is assumed that self and social organization lack the constancy required to be useful beyond the singular instance being considered. This implies that social life is unpredictable and that testing theories of social psychological phenomena is not possible. What is possible is to describe interaction as it occurs and to understand that interaction after it occurs.	It is assumed that there is sufficient continuity in social life to justify seeking empirical generalizations applying beyond particular interactions. Concepts useful in understanding one situation can be useful in understanding other situations (Heise, 1986; Kuhn, 1964; S. Stryker, 1980).
Actors' definitions and interpretations change continuously in immediate interactive situations. This fluidity extends to social life in general; thus, interaction may be reasonably described only as it unfolds. Consequently, the relevance of concepts representing social structure (as well as concepts imported from prior analyses of interaction) is dubious.	The purposes of sociological social psychology make it essential to include social structure when studying social psychological processes. Conceiving of social structure as relatively stable patterns of social relationships and social interaction, these patterns constrain actors' definitions, providing sufficient stability in definitions to justify using structural concepts in social psychological analyses.
Only the perspectives of participants in social interaction are relevant to understanding their interaction. Using the perspectives of sociological observers negates true understanding. Consequently, the voices of observers are to be eliminated in description and analysis.	Actors' definitions must be considered in explanations of their behavior, but these alone are insufficient as explanations.
Self emerges from society but becomes free of structural constraints over time, acting as an independent source of social behavior (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Novelty and creativity are highly probable in social life. Social life is continuously newly constructed.	Self is a conduit through which prior social organization and structure reproduce themselves (Burawoy, 1979; Goffman, 1974). Creativity and novelty are possible but limited by the degree to which extant social life reproduces existing patterns.
The ideas of symbolic interactionism require commitment to qualitative research methods. The most useful methods of pursuing its ideas are naturalistic; ethnography, participant observation, and intensive unstructured interviewing are strongly preferred. Consequently, the locus of research is generally a small set of interactants.	The widest range of social science data gathering methods, including sample surveys, simulations, and experimentation, are available for use, and quantitative methods of analysis are preferred.

results, seeing its tasks as giving voice to its research subjects and the description and understanding of the total particularities of the situation under examination (Harris, 2001). Work in this vein can serve the end of achieving theoretical generalization by suggesting new concepts potentially of wider use, by pointing up lacunae in current theoretical statements, and perhaps as evidence increasing or decreasing the plausibility of ideas presented as theories with general applicability (for exceptions to the general rule that preference for qualitative methodology is associated with a lack of interest in general theory and a failure to attend to social structures beyond concrete situations of interaction, see Adler & Adler, 1991, and Strauss, 1978).

Social Structural Symbolic Interactionism

This perspective developed in part out of critiques of the traditional interactionist frame, claiming the traditional perspective was ideologically biased because it focused on everyday life and neglected broader issues of power, politics, and economics in society (Gouldner, 1970). Huber (1973) saw the same bias, viewing

it as a consequence of pragmatic philosophy's tacit endorsement of the political-economic status quo. The perspective also developed out of critiques of the social psychological frame enunciated by Blumer or provided by Mead. With respect to Blumer, these critiques incorporated beliefs that a frame minimizing the import of social structure on social psychological processes is unsuitable for the pursuit of general theory whose implications are subject to rigorous empirical test, and that rejection of the goals and methods of conventional science is unwarranted (S. Stryker, 1968).

With respect to Mead, critiques focused on the ambiguity, imprecision, and lack of fit with current social reality of key concepts (S. Stryker, 1968). Thus, these concepts cannot serve without modification as the basis for theories that are empirically refutable. Mead's image of society is particularly unsatisfactory. He sees society as relatively undifferentiated, with conflict likely to disappear as social evolution leads to the folding of smaller units into more encompassing units. The contemporary sociological vision of society is of a highly differentiated unit composed of multiple subparts, and in which tension and conflict both within societies and between societies are relatively permanent characteristics. In keeping with his view of society, Mead sees self as singular, internally relatively undifferentiated and ideally coherent, a humanistic view making for difficulties in effective theorizing about—for example—how disparate roles result in intrapersonal conflict. Nevertheless, with few but significant modifications grounded in his own ideas, he provides a frame with virtues important to social psychology (S. Stryker, 2008), a frame that can accommodate social stability and change, social production and reproduction, a sense of humans as active agents and not social automatons, and the inherent possibility of novelty in social life.

The need for modifications brings us back to structural symbolic interactionism. Since organized society exists before the appearance of all new members, the basic premise of structural symbolic interactionism can be rewritten as "society shapes self, which shapes social interaction," although the reciprocal nature of these relationships is also recognized. Taking as a starting point sociology's sense of social structures as patterned interactions and relationships emphasizes the durability of patterns, their resistance to change, and their capacity to reproduce themselves. The frame also sees social differentiation as a continuous process working against the homogenization of structures and interactional experience within societies; it sees societies as mosaics of diverse parts relating variously to one another; and it views social life as largely taking place within relatively small networks of role relationships.

This image of societies implies greater impact of social structures on social interaction than Mead's thinking allowed. It also implies thinking of structures as social boundaries impacting on the probability that persons with different backgrounds and resources will enter particular social relationships. Still further, it implies that social structures of various kinds and on various levels will both constrain and facilitate entrance into and departures from networks of relationships. Accepting Mead's dictum that self is created in the image of society, the frame adopts a multifaceted view of self, and it permits the facets to be independent of, aligned with, or in conflict with one another. Lastly, the frame visualizes social structures as related in a process in which large-scale structures (such as ethnicity, gender, education, and age) work through intermediate structures (like neighborhoods, schools, and associational memberships) which then work though structural or ethnic overlap (the degree to which the same persons or persons of the same ethnicity are involved in multiple network relationships) to affect commitments to social network relationships. Social network relationships are proximate structures impacting on the organization and content of self (S. Stryker, 1980; Stryker, Serpe, & Hunt, 2005). Accepting in modified form ideas of traditional interactionism—the fluidity and openness of social interaction, self-direction, and human agency deriving from symbolic capacities—the modifications emphasize

the constraints and facilitations inherent in membership in society.

While its imagery asserts that person and society are mutually constitutive, the structural interactionist frame nevertheless gives causal priority to society on the grounds that all historical persons are enmeshed in society at birth and cannot survive outside of preexisting organized social relationships. "(I)n the beginning there is society" (S. Stryker, 1997, p. 315). This aphorism leads to other underlying arguments of the frame: human experience is socially organized, not random; and contemporary societies incorporate diverse structural subparts. Structural interactionism conceptualizes society as a differentiated but organized mosaic of role relationships, groups, networks, organizations, communities, and institutions crosscut by structures of age, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and more. Subparts can be independent or interdependent, isolated or closely related to one another, cooperative or conflicting. Experience is shaped by social relationships in the parts of society in which persons participate. In general, social structures define boundaries, impacting on the likelihood that those located within them will or will not relate to particular kinds of others, interacting with them over particular kinds of issues with particular kinds of material resources. Structures also affect the likelihood that persons will evolve particular kinds of selves and have particular kinds of motivations and symbolic resources for defining situations they enter. People generally live their lives in relatively small and specialized sets of social relationships, through roles attached to the various sets.

Agreeing with interactionists in general that social life is constructed, thus open to reconstruction and radical social change, structural interactionists note that constructions are constrained by objective characteristics of the world lived in, prior constructions, norm-based pressures from interaction partners, and habit. Much interaction simply reproduces existing structures (Burawoy, 1979); while humans are actors, action does not necessarily result in changing situations or larger structural settings. We can expect social behavior to exhibit a blend of creativity as well as stability and change; thus, a major theoretical task becomes specifying conditions that lead to varying degrees of one or the other (Serpe & Stryker, 1987).

Self-definitions, in particular, mediate the relationship of society to social behavior. Rooted in reactions of others, existing selves interact dialectically with others' responses to allow some independence from others' expectations, but the symbolic and subjective are constrained by persons' social locations. Moreover, external realities can impinge, sometimes strongly, on social behavior independently of definitions, even self-definitions; for example, the realities of social class have their effect whether or not persons affected by class understand that they do. Structural interactionism argues that an adequate social psychological frame must have a place for both the symbolic and the structural, and must view them as simultaneously operative. The theoretical task again becomes one of specifying the mix of the two. Role concepts are basic to providing for social structure in social psychological analyses because they facilitate the integration of traditional interactionist and role theoretic ideas. Building "up" to units of social organization (organizations are in part composed of persons enacting social roles) and "down" to the person (the person can be viewed as a construction consisting of the roles they enact), the concept of role serves to bridge person and society.

As subjective definitions, and following Mead's dictum, selves reflect society, sharing the characteristics of society: they are also complex, differentiated, and organized. Essential subparts of self are identities, internalized expectations attached to particular networks of social relationships, and they reflect compatible or conflicting expectations. Interpersonal and intrapersonal role and identity conflict or reinforcement possibilities are generally present in social relationships and interaction; the degree to which one or another of these possibilities occurs will reflect the characteristics of ties between persons and social structure.

Structural Symbolic Interactionist Theories

One criterion of a frame's worth is its capacity to generate testable and "successful" (in the sense that tests indicate their validity) theories. To make that case, we rely primarily on identity theory (S. Stryker, 1968; 1980/2000) and secondarily on identity control theory (Burke, 1991) and affect control theory (Heise, 1979).

Identity theory (S. Stryker, 1968; 1980/2000) emerged as a specification of a premise drawn from Mead incorporating the development of his arguments in the preceding section on contemporary structural symbolic interactionism. Stated most compactly, as demonstrated in Fig. 10.1, the premise asserts that "society" impacts "self," which in turn impacts "social behavior."

However, a requirement of a theory is that it must be capable of empirical test, and each of the three terms of the premise defeats that requirement at the outset since each is too broad, vague, and imprecise to be useful in research. One way to deal with this fact is to specify the terms of the premise, that is, to narrow each term to a well-defined part of the too broad larger set.

We begin with the term representing the outcome variable the theory seeks to explain. In the present case, the vague, unmeasurable term "social behavior" is specified as role choice behavior, that is, opting to meet expectations of one role rather than another as that which the theory seeks to explain. In the minimal statement of identity theory (S. Stryker, 1968), the question serving as the prototype of issues the theory was designed to deal was, why is it that one man chooses to spend a free weekend afternoon taking his children to the zoo, while another chooses to spend that time on the golf course with his buddies?

Next, as the interactionist framework leads to the expectation that "self" is decisive in bridging the gap between society and social behavior, the task is to specify the aspect of self that may be important to the explanation of role choice. The concept of "identity salience" is a specification of self, elaborated from a multifaceted view of self. Persons are seen as having multiple identities, potentially as many as they have organized sets of role relationships in which they participate. Identity salience is defined as the (differential) likelihood that identities will be invoked in a variety of situations. Identities have two requirements: that persons are placed as social objects by others assigning position designations and expectations to them, and that they internalize the designations and associated expectations. Identities, then, are self-cognitions tied to roles and through roles to positions in organized social relationships. They are cognitive schemata (Markus, 1977) with the capacity to affect behavioral choices as well as other cognitive and conceptual processes (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). As cognitive schemata, they are not situation-specific and can be carried into the multiple situations that persons experience.

The specification of the overly general "society" is "commitment," a term widely and variously used in social science. While this term generally is seen as describing value-based choices, here its use follows Kornhauser (1962), in researching why some leaders in a radical social movement chose to remain in their leadership positions despite clear evidence that the movements' goals were unachievable, while other leaders did not. He found, for example, that leaders whose spouses were involved in the movement, whose social lives revolved around other movement members, and whose income depended on movement-related activities remained committed to their movement positions and roles, while leaders drawn out of movement relationships for whatever reason did not. As this suggests, commitment is conceived here as interactional and affective ties to others in

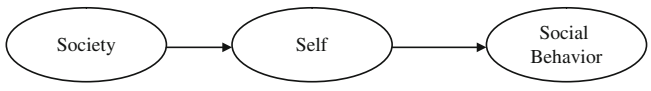

Fig. 10.1 The identity theory premise

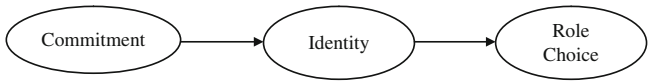

Fig. 10.2 Basic identity theory

social networks. This smallest unit of social structure is measured in terms of the degree to which one's relationships with a set of others depend on being a particular kind of person and playing out particular roles. These translations produce a theoretical argument explaining variation in role choice behavior that can be tested empirically. In minimal form, as demonstrated in Fig. 10.2, the theory proposes that commitment impacts identity salience which in turn impacts role choice.

The first test of identity theory, based on a sample of 328 adults from a large Midwestern city interviewed face-to-face in 1978 (Stryker & Serpe, 1982), used a path model to test the relationship between commitment, identity salience, and role performance associated with their religious identity and found the hypothesized impact of commitment on identity salience and salience on role performance, measured as time spent in role. Specifically, religious commitment significantly increased religious identity salience and religious identity salience significantly increased the "time spent in the religious role." (The basic identity theory model has also been supported in a number of replications, often altering the model by using different indicators of role choice: see Lee, 2005; Owens & Serpe, 2003; Serpe, 1987, 1991; Serpe & Stryker, 1993; Stryker & Serpe, 1982, 1983, 1994; Stryker et al., 2005.)

This work was followed by a panel study of 320 college freshmen who responded at three time points during their first semester to questionnaires focusing on six identities (student, athletic/recreational, extracurricular, personal involvements, dating, and family). The data addressed theoretical and methodological aspects of identity theory. Serpe (1987) tested the theoretically hypothesized importance of the relationship of commitment and identity salience. Using data from the three time points, this paper demonstrated that, while the relationship of commitment and identity salience is reciprocal, the impact of commitment on identity salience is greater than the effect of identity salience on commitment.

Another paper examined the relationship of prior social relationships and change in identity as a function of moving to a new environment, meeting new people, and negotiating a new social structure (Serpe & Stryker, 1987). The findings suggest that if students are able to reestablish prior social relationships, thus recreating their earlier social environments, the structure of their identities does not change; to the extent they are unable to reconstruct their prior social relationships, the salience of these identities lessens. Serpe (1991) used these data to assess the role of cognitive activity—thinking and planning—associated with an identity on the salience of that identity. The findings indicated that in addition to affective commitment increasing identity salience, the greater the time spent thinking and planning about future role performance the higher was the identity salience.

Serpe and Stryker (1993) looked at how prior social relationships relate to movement into new social relationships and how that movement affects the salience of the identity associated with the new relationships. This research focused on the impact of having a highly salient family identity that could not be enacted easily because of time and distance separation of student and family. The findings suggest that those with strong family ties before entering college were much more likely to develop new social relationships that reproduced the close nature of their prior family interaction.

The last manuscript (Stryker & Serpe, 1994) using these data questions the theoretical and methodological relationship between the concepts of psychological centrality and identity salience and their joint and separate effect on role performance. The goal of this analysis was to decompose the independent effects of the more general measure of how an identity represents the person's self-concept—psychological centrality measured by the level of how important a

given identity is to how the person sees themselves, from the more situational measure of self—identity salience measured by the probability of invoking a specific identity across situations.

The two measures were related but were substantially independent of one another, and both helped explain role performance. However, salience contributed more to the explanation than did centrality. The conclusion reached was that both should be incorporated into identity theoretic research: their explanatory strength will likely vary given the identity and context of interaction implicated.

In 1993, a second data set was collected using telephone interviews of 2,845 adults in five southern California counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego. Owens and Serpe (2003) used these data to look at the relationships among self-evaluation, commitment, and identity salience of whites, African-Americans, and Latinos for the family identity. The findings show clear differences in the process in the three racial/ethnic groups. Specifically, African-Americans and Latinos have higher levels of commitment to the family than whites. Self-esteem increases identity salience for whites and African-Americans at the same level but is non-significant for Latinos.

Examining the impact of three levels of social structure—large scale, intermediate, and proximal—on commitment, Stryker et al. (2005) found evidence that large-scale social structural variables function to bring certain persons together into some relationships and keep others out of those relationships. Such variables also directly affected the level of commitments to relationships entered, but their impact, while statistically significant, was relatively weak. That is, while educational attainment, income, age, gender, and ethnicity either facilitate or constrain opportunities for social action, positions in these larger social structures did not prescribe social action. Rather, it was social structural variables closer to social relationships per se, in particular the degree to which persons' role sets overlap, that strongly impact commitment, perhaps because of the interpersonal trust engendered by that overlap. These findings, it should be noted, do not deny the general import of societal level stratification that sociology has traditionally taken as its central concern.

A new longitudinal panel data set following 1,365 science students in 48 US universities began in 2005 and is scheduled to complete data collection in 2013. Available data provided an opportunity to assess impact, stability, and change in identity (Merolla, Serpe, Stryker, & Schultz, 2010). Focusing on identity salience as a predictor of behavioral intent, this research showed that over 3 years, students with a highly salient "scientist" identity sustained intent to become working scientists net of other factors, including mentoring, funding, and research experience. Rather, involvement in proximate social structures—high levels of interaction with other students with strong scientist identities—maintains the salience of the science identity.

Three more studies of identity salience merit mention. Callero (1985) found that the greater the number of relationships based on a blood donor identity, the higher the salience of that identity. Nuttbrock and Freudiger (1991) examined the salience of being a mother among first time mothers, finding that the higher the salience of a mother identity, the more likely mothers were to engage in mothering behavior, make sacrifices in other aspects of daily life to enact the mother identity, and seek less assistance from others (husbands, family, friends) in performing the role of mother. Lee (1998, 2002, 2005), using identity theory to research a summer training program in science for high-school students, demonstrated that commitment and identity salience are influential in underwriting continued interest in science education and that the former reflects the impact of social relationships. In an investigation of gender-related differences in interests in science, Lee (1998) showed that female students are likely to see discrepancies between how they perceive themselves and how they perceive other science students, and that controlling for these discrepancies accounts for part of the

gender differences in interest in science. Lee (2002, 2005) also found support for the identity theory model in contemporaneous effects of identity variables in science-related activities for boy and girls. Specifically, he found that the greater the affective commitment toward a science identity, the greater the salience of the science identity and the greater the academic performance for both girls and boys.

This body of research provides evidence allowing extensions and elaborations of the basic theory (for details see Lee, 2002; Serpe, 1987; Serpe & Stryker, 1987; S. Stryker, 2008; Stryker et al., 2005) as well as stimulating novel theoretical efforts to relate the underlying frame and identity theory to life course processes (Stryker & Wells, 1988), conditions under which structures facilitate or constrain freedom of action in social life (S. Stryker, 1994), variation in kinds and levels of participation in social movement activities (S. Stryker, 2000), the interrelationship of identity and self-esteem (Ervin & Stryker, 2006), and emotion as an amplifier of commitment (S. Stryker, 2004). Such work testifies to the fertility of the structural frame as well as the empirical soundness of theories developed from it.

Two theories closely related to identity theory share the latter's intellectual heritage: identity control theory (Burke, 2004) and affect control theory (Heise, 1979). Both developed independently, derive from Mead, and utilize versions of structural interactionism. Both build on Powers (1973) work on cybernetic control systems in their concern with the internal dynamics of self, viewed as a system that moves to restore equilibriums threatened by events external to the person.

Identity control theory (ICT) began by examining self-meanings of identities and now focuses on the internal dynamics of these meanings. It uses the concept of "identity standard," defined as the individual meanings a person holds representing who they are as a person; Burke (2004) terms these "personal identities." Personal identity is the foundation of a cybernetic model whereby individuals compare how they view themselves to their perceptions of how others view them, and self-verification is used to keep perceptions of self and perceptions of others' views in equilibrium. Adjustments in existing identities occur in order to secure responses from others that confirm the meaning of the identities; and identities change when disturbing external events are so great that those prior identities cannot be restored. Some theoretical effort has been given to the question of how the external processes described by identity theory link to the internal processes described by ICT, focusing in part on when and how changes in commitments impact on internal processes aimed at restoring equilibriums (Stryker & Burke, 2000); but the question warrants (and is receiving) further theoretical and research attention (Burke & Stets, 2009). The idea of self-verification is equally central to Swann's (1981) work, but he and Burke use the term differently. For both, verification involves the relation of others' views of the person and the person's own views of self. For Burke, however, verification aims at bringing self and others' views close together whether that involves changes in self views or changes in the perceptions of others' view of the person; for Swann, verification involves bringing others' views of the person's self into line with the person's own views of self.

Early in ICT's development, a series of papers (Burke, 1980; Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Burke & Tully, 1977) investigated the relation of the meaning structures of identities to behavior, on the hypothesis that the former would predict the latter. For example, if a person's self-meaning as a worker includes accuracy, precision, and efficiency, then this should predict working behavior consistent with work success, in contrast to that of a person whose self-meaning is more aloof, unconcerned, and relaxed. These studies measured meaning structures of identities using bipolar adjectives (e.g., clumsy–graceful, stupid–smart, smooth–rough). The method has been used to investigate the self-meanings of a number of identities: gender (Burke & Cast, 1997; Stets & Burke, 1996), the student identity (Reitzes & Burke, 1980), identities associated with growing older (Mutran & Burke, 1979), and the moral identity (Stets

& Carter, 2006). Each of these inquiries shows a strong link between meaning structures and behavior.

Building on these studies and incorporating the work of Powers (1973), Burke developed a cybernetic control model of identity. In an early statement of the formulation, Burke (1991) argued that when social stress creates a discrepancy between persons' self-meanings and their perceptions of the meanings contained in others' views of them, individuals will seek to reduce the discrepancies so as to receive the verification essential to maintaining the self-meaning of their identities. Burke and Reitzes (1991) suggested that the greater the commitment to an identity the greater would be the effort to ensure a match between the self-meaning of the identity and the feedback that persons receive from others about that identity. Their research on students showed that those who received rewards from enacting the student identity, and who had more ties with others who verified their identity, had a higher level of commitment to the identity, and exhibited a stronger link between identity meanings and identity behavior. In a sample of newly married couples, Burke and Harrod (2005) found that couples whose identities as spouse were verified had more positive emotions than those couples whose identities were not verified. Stets and Harrod (2004) in a telephonic survey study of 1,100 adults from Los Angeles showed that respondents with higher status characteristics (white vs. non-white, males, higher educated, etc.) experienced greater levels of self-verification across a set of identities. In another research on status and self-verification, Cast, Stets, and Burke (1999) showed that among newly married couples, the higher status members were more likely to have their self-views confirmed by the views of them held by their lower status partners and were more likely to influence the self-views of the lower status partners than vice versa (for a more complete review of ICT research, see Burke & Stets, 2009).

Affect control theory (ACT) views interactions as involving persons doing something to or with other persons. It assumes that both the actors and the action(s) relating them have affective meanings reflecting cultural attitudes that exist in the situations in which the interaction takes place. That is, each element—person, other, activity, as in the triads "mother feeds child" or "mother strikes child"—can be characterized by a set of affective values representing its semantic meaning in an environing culture. If an element's existing affective value is altered by an external event, an adjustment of the meaning of one or more of the elements restores equilibrium. For example, if the event is described by "mother hurts child," ACT predicts the affective value of either the mother or the child, or both, will become more negative, so that the earlier affective balance will be maintained. Identity change occurs when a disturbance is sufficiently great such that the affective meanings of the identity cannot be brought into alignment with the other elements.

Empirical research associated with ACT (Heise, 1979, 2007) has focused on measuring culture, tests of the control principle, and application in topical areas (for a more complete review and discussion of research in these areas, see Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006). A necessary first step in allowing tests of the control principle and topical applications was finding a way to measure the direction and level of the affect attached to the identities of actors and the action that joined actor and other. The solution found was to develop "cultural meaning dictionaries" that provided affect scores for the words these contained. This work drew on the semantic differential formulation of Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) showing that the semantic meaning of words is captured in the main by scales measuring the evaluation (a good–bad dimension), potency (a strong–weak dimension), and activity (an active–passive dimension) of words. The dictionaries contain affect scores based on responses from samples of persons representing diverse cultures and subcultures, and these scores are then used to analyze various topics, for example, emotions (MacKinnon & Keating, 1989), occupational titles (MacKinnon & Langford, 1994), sexual/erotic identities (Schneider, 1999), and Internet culture (King, 2001).

The research focusing on the control process deals with the assumption of ACT that individuals strive to sustain stable affective meanings in social interaction. For example, Wiggins and Heise (1987) assessed interaction between experimental participants whose identity was consistent over time and experimental confederates whose identities varied over time, in an attempt to determine how changes in definitions and meanings impact on social interaction. Experimental conditions manipulated whether college student participants interacted with other students or persons from a delinquency facility and whether the participants were praised or criticized. As predicted, when the participant was criticized they became friendlier to the student confederates who praised them in order to maintain the stability of their identities and behavior.

ACT application studies include work on emotions. Heise and Calhan (1995) asked respondents to put themselves in 128 different situations depicted by vignettes, and then asked about emotional reactions to each situation. In half the situations the respondents were actors, and in the other half they were the objects of action. The vignettes included situations and questions like: "Imagine that you are asking someone for help" or "Imagine that you are being criticized by your boss," "How do you feel at the moment?" Consistent with symbolic interactionism generally, ACT predicts that placing persons cognitively in a situation will invoke the same emotions as experiencing the situation. Results support the predictions: for example, when asked to imagine praise, participants felt proud; when asked to imagine failure, they felt shamed.

Francis (1997) used a qualitative research frame to study groups involved in emotion work, a group of divorced individuals, and a bereavement group, into which participants entered with strong negative emotions. She observed that group facilitators did not focus on the negative emotions, but rather on the redefinition of meanings associated with marital dissolution and the loss of a loved one, finding that to the extent participants' emotional state improved, this was due to a redefinition of the meanings surrounding the situation and actors.

Kroska (1997, 2001, 2008) investigated cultural sentiments attached to gender roles and gender attitudes in a sample of couples, using the meanings and sentiments represented by the evaluation, potency, and activity dimensions of the semantic differential measure of culture. She found strong, consistent patterns in the cultural meanings of gendered role behavior, much less so with respect to gender attitudes. Tsoudis and Smith-Lovin (1998, 2001; Tsoudis, 2000) have applied ACT predictions to judgments about criminal defendants. Presenting participants with vignettes of court cases, they examined the impact of criminal defendants' emotional displays (remorse, concern, indifference, etc.) on observers' views of the defendants and sentencing judgments. They found, as predicted, that participants had more empathy with and gave lighter sentences to those who displayed emotions linked to being a good person.

Bridging Capacity: Connections to Other Perspectives and Theories

A single theoretical frame must be focused to be useful in formulating researchable theories; thus, the theories derivable from a frame are necessarily limited in scope. To be useful in a practical sense, other frames and theories must be linked to them, and their capacity to bridge to other frames and theories becomes important in evaluating them. Relating ideas across theoretical and research traditions also helps to counter the intellectual chaos in fields in which specialized theories dealing with specialized topics are unrelated. Further, a major value of bridging frameworks and theories lies in opportunities for innovative theoretical work created when a frame or theory is challenged. Challenges are unlikely when frames or theories remain isolated from one another. Building—even pointing out—bridges demands knowledge of ideas that have implications beyond particular segments, and this implies the necessity for communication

across segments. Communication across segments increases the probability of specialized practitioners obtaining useful insights that would have been unavailable if communication were limited to persons sharing the same ideas. Do the structural interactionist frame and its derivative identity theory bridge to other social psychological frames and theories in sociology, to the cognitive social psychology currently favored by psychologists, and to other segments of sociology?

Bridges to Other Social Psychological Frames and Theories in Sociology

Expectation states and exchange are frames and related theories prominent in contemporary sociological social psychology that do not derive from Mead. The former developed from efforts to explain the findings of Bales' (1950, 1970) small groups research that unacquainted persons brought together to work on group tasks very quickly show inequalities in interaction and stabilize status structures that reflect these inequalities. Viewing expectations as inferences from cultural meanings associated with social characteristics such as gender, social rewards such as wealth, and patterns of behavioral interchanges such as speaking first and forcefully (Ridgeway, 2006), the frame and related theory that emerged focused on performance expectations of contributions to group success. Associated research showed that performance expectations led to behaviors that reinforce inequalities and to structures that support these inequalities (Berger, Connor, & Fisek, 1974; Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977). Very similar ideas exist in symbolic interactionist accounts of how persons entering a new group without information about one another organize themselves to deal with problems that bring them together. To interact effectively, they attach meaning to the interaction by specifying who they and others are, and what the situation of interaction is. Without prior experience with or information about one another, they use cues in early interaction and cultural cues that attach meanings to appearance, dress, speech patterns, and style of early participation to define the situation and organize their behavior. They then behave toward one another in ways reflecting these definitions. Since the meanings of the cues tend to be widely shared in a culture, initial behaviors based on the cues also tend to draw confirming and reinforcing responses, solidifying structures implicit in the meanings of the cues.[4]

This commonality of ideas, despite the differences in language used to discuss the ideas, suggests that interactionist and expectation state theorists and researchers can benefit from one another's concepts and processes. For identity theory, the meanings of social roles and identities are expectations for future behavior, identities are transportable cognitive schemata, and the salience of identities is an important determinant of whether an identity will be transported to new situations. Expectation states research has shown that negative performance expectations assigned to females by males in mixed gender groups (Pugh & Wahrman, 1983) can be reversed and that new positive expectations carry over to subsequent group interactions (Lucas, 2003). Both identity theory and expectation states theory would be enriched by answers to a number of questions. For example, how do preexistent salient identities inconsistent with meanings in cultural cues available in task groups impact performance expectations and emergent social structures? Would males with stereotypical male identities become more positive in their performance expectations for females in response to information negating attitudes explicit in their stereotypical identity? Would they carry these more positive expectations, assuming they occur, into new group interactions?

Exchange theory focuses on the structure of exchange networks' use of power, in recent years becoming concerned with a variety of social psychological issues including trust, fairness, emotion, cohesion, and commitment (Cook & Rice, 2003). Lawler (2001, Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2000) has developed a theory to explain the commitment of participants in exchange relationships—a tendency of exchange partners to continue exchanges with those with whom they have exchanged in the past. This theory asserts

that repeated exchanges with others generate positive affect for the relationship itself that creates commitment to the relationship sufficient to override self-interest. Lawler (2003) has incorporated structural symbolic interactionist and identity theoretical ideas into his affect theory of social exchange. He delineates the commonalities and the differences between the two frames, suggesting that exchange theory meets interactionism's need to contextualize social interaction, and he bridges exchange and identity theories by asserting that actors who are attached affectively to groups increase their commitments to identities attached to role relationships within the group. He also argues that this relationship is reciprocal: when identity-related role relationships within a group are strong, affective ties to the group itself are strengthened. Lawler's bridges between exchange and interactionism use mainly the concepts of role identities and identity salience. If exchange theory relaxed its assumption that persons enter exchange relations with a single identity, use might be made of the concept of multiple identities; at a minimum, exchange experiments would better approximate "real world" circumstances even though analysis of experimental data would be complicated.

Bridging to Cognitive Social Psychology, Social Identity Theory, and Personality Theory

Psychologists' interest in self, growing out of the cognitive revolution in psychology roughly 60 years ago, opened the way for dialogue between sociological and psychological versions of social psychology. That dialogue has borne fruit, despite differences in conceptualizing self. Identity theory owes a large debt to work on selves as cognitive schemata, especially Markus' (1977) finding that perceptions of self-schema-related stimuli are faster and memories more accurate and stronger than for unrelated stimuli. Recognizing that self and so identity are schemata implies that people are more likely to see situations they enter as calling for identity-relevant behaviors than they would if relevant schemata were not held. It also implies that opportunities for identity-related activities are more likely to be recognized and acted upon. In short, viewing self and identity as schemata lends credence to the identity theory argument that salient identities produce social behavior consistent with expectations attached to those identities.

It is through the concept of multiple identities and the related concept of identity salience that a structural interactionist frame and identity theory have had an impact on thinking in cognitive social psychology (Reid & Deaux, 1996; Roberts & Donahue, 1994), but a potentially greater contribution has yet to be realized. Many cognitive theorists and researchers (e.g., Higgins, 1987) have noted that self and identity are produced by persons' experience, and simplified their work by assuming the randomness of experience.[5] However, experiences are not randomly distributed; both the content and the meanings taken from what is experienced are shaped by the locations of persons in the social structures of class, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, etc. As argued earlier, large-scale structures channel persons into more intermediate-level structures and the latter channel persons into networks of social relationships. The relationships persons enter into impact in important ways on their self-concepts, identities, attitudes, and behaviors. Recognizing the structural sources of these social psychological phenomena deepens understanding of cognitive processes. It also reminds cognitive theorists of the limits of purely cognitive explanations of social behaviors.

The concept of social identity (Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Spears, Chapter 9, this volume) has captured the attention of perhaps most psychologists doing social psychological work on identity. That concept, defined in terms of perceived membership in a social category, contrasts in significant ways with the concept of role identity defined as internalization of role expectations attached to positions in social networks. The distinction reflects a fundamental difference in the orientations of sociological and psychological social psychologies: as noted, sociologists are likely to take society (in the form of interaction and relationships) as

their start point, while psychologists are apt to assume that "in the beginning there is the individual." Hence, longstanding sociological usage has defined "group" in terms of interactional bonds, whereas psychologists are apt to use the term to apply to both social units based on members' bonds and social units based on shared categorical identifications (for example, Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, following Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).[6] Whether either position is more than philosophical preference has yet to be decided. In the meantime, we can observe that while there has been some inclination to see the two in either–or terms, recent work in both sociology and psychology examines the relationship between social and role identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Deaux & Martin, 2003; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Cotting, 1999; Thoits & Virshup, 1997). In any event, the outcome of the debate is likely to be that cognitive identification with a category is both precursor and consequence of involvement in social networks representative of the category. In brief, the outcome will involve bridging the structural interactionist and the cognitive frames as well as their derivatives identity theory and social identity theory.

Psychologists have often conceptualized self and identity as dispositional structures of traits, and personality theory has generally followed suit. But some personality theorists (an early instance is Roberts & Donahue, 1994), open to the idea of role-based traits, have introduced into their work a multiple conception of self, specified in multiple trait terms, as well as the concept of identity salience as an organizer of self. Accepting that people can construct identities based on traits (see S. Stryker, 2002) brings a wide range of identity theoretic concepts into play in research questions for sociologists starting with role identities or psychologists starting with traits: for example, can trait-based expectations override role expectations (and vice versa)? If they can, under what conditions do they do so? Can multiple identities be based on traits? On traits of differential salience? Will structural overlap mean competition or its absence between trait-based identities, as it does for role identities?

Bridging to Other Segments of Sociology

Much current work in organizational sociology has embraced cognitive variables in theories of institutions and organizations. That surprising intellectual turn, surprising because of the antipathy of earlier organizational theorists and researchers to social psychology, opened the way for bridges from Mead, structural symbolic interactionism, and identity theory to sociological work on institutions and organizations.

Beginning with the new institutionalism's use of culture as cognitive taken-for-grantedness (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zald, 1970), a series of cognitive concepts—group and role identities, meaning, multiple selves—now appear in organizational theory. Robin Stryker (R. Stryker, 1989) shows how differences in professional role identities and related attributions of meanings and decision-making logics of economists and lawyers on the National Labor Relations Board, an American regulatory agency, contributed to organizational and societal conflicts. The conflicts remade the NRLB from an organization in which economists had considerable authority to one that eliminated economists and economic science. A second study (R. Stryker, 1994) extended the earlier work by showing how the different professional role identities and corresponding cognitive frames and decision-making logics of lawyers and scientists helped shape legitimacy, order, and change in legal institutions. This study demonstrated how professional identities shape perceived meanings and subsequent behaviors that can both change and stabilize social structures. A third piece (R. Stryker, 2000) lays out explicitly the implications of the earlier work on cognitive aspects of institutions for new theories of organizations. Institutionalization of behavioral norms and practices, such as reliance on precedent in legal decision making in US courts or the European Court of Justice, means that these norms and practices increasingly become taken for granted, unchallenged, and unchallengeable. She notes that as new groups of professionals move across organizations and

institutional sectors, distinctive ways of thinking and doing attached to their professional role identities go with them. When, for example, scientists participate in courtroom arguments, they may push lawyers to question legal precedent incorporating faulty understandings of cause and effect. Creation and diffusion of potentially competing professional roles and identities across institutional sectors undermines the tendency to take any one set of institutional norms and practices for granted. Similarly, persons who occupy structural positions that subject them to competing identities or contradictory institutional decision-making logics may find that these create cognitive and emotional dissonance, ambiguities, and role conflicts that promote active choices and institutional innovation.

Movement toward Mead, symbolic interactionism, and identity theory in work on organizations occurs in a study of change in French gastronomy from classical to nouvelle cuisine (Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003). Cultural frame institutionalism has difficulty explaining how existing institutional logics and role identities are replaced by new logics and role identities. Difficulties arise because cultural frame institutionalism holds that institutional logics are belief systems that provide guidelines for action and governance structures by which power and authority are exercised. Thus, institutions are seen as durable, their logics are viewed as constituting the identities of actors and creating obligations, and their governing structures will constrain action. Consequently, organizations will resemble one another and exhibit little diversity. Further, Rao et al. assert, cultural frame institutionalism, glossing over variations in professional logics and role identities, says little about how social movements impact reinstitutionalization in the professions. They propose that identity-based social movement theory enables understanding of how movements foster cultural change in the professions by reshaping logics and redefining individuals' role identities.

Basic to change is the introduction of identity-discrepant cues with regard to professional logics and identities. Identity movements, celebrating the differences between new logics and identities and old, create competition between new and old identities that jeopardize the old and lead actors to adopt the new. Initially, individual logics and role identities are altered and in that sense are precursors to identity movements. Specifics of their account of the changes in both the cuisine and in the professionals who altered the cuisine make it evident that it is the meanings of cuisine and chef that are at stake in the competition between old and new logics and role identities. This aligns their frame with that of Mead as well as with a structural symbolic interactionism and identity theory.

While Pratt and Foreman (2000) are concerned with the management of multiple organizational identities and not individual-level identities, they explicitly borrow the logic and insights of Mead, the structural interactionist frame, and identity theory to guide their work. Seeking to manage organizations containing multiple sub-units with different objectives, work cultures, past histories, etc., managers find themselves facing diverse audiences with differing expectations of them in the larger organization they head and are subject to role and identity tensions and conflict. Apparently, managing organizational identities necessarily involves managing individual-level identities as well; while distinguishable analytically, organizational and individual-level identities are not independent of one another.

Kraatz and Block (2008) carry these bridging themes forward in their work on organizations in pluralistic contexts, that is, the case in which organizations function in multiple institutional spheres and present varied faces to the multiple audiences in their environment. They cite three key sources of their perspective on such organizations, two of which are conventional in sociological analyses, namely, the institutionalisms of Selznick (1949) and March (1994, 1999), both seeing the environments of organizations as politically and ideologically heterogeneous and the latter embracing a sociological conception of self. The remaining key source is the structural symbolic interactionist frame and its derivative identity theory. Kraatz and Block specifically credit identity theory's distinction between the self (the whole) and multiple identities (parts

of the whole) as particularly critical in understanding organizational governance in pluralistic organizations, asserting that it is through governance that an organizational self selects, prioritizes, and integrates its various institutionally given identities.

Citing the attention given to processes of identity expression and verification, the ideas that people seek ways to behave that express their salient identities and they seek identity confirming responses from others (Burke & Stets, 2009; S. Stryker, 1980; Swann, 1983), Kraatz and Block argue that organizations' diverse identities are legitimated or delegitimized through actors seeking to validate their identities via symbolic exchanges with different segments of their environments. They suggest, further, that it is individuals, especially leaders, whose personal role identities strongly impact expressions of organizational identities. The following is a lesson those interested in identity processes themselves can take away from this work: multiple identity organizations are clearly fertile grounds for research on the consequences of actors' personal identities meshing or failing to mesh with collective identities.

Concluding Remarks

This essay reviewed the development of symbolic interactionism from the Scottish moral philosophers to the present, and then focused on particular contemporary strains of that tradition, namely, a structural symbolic interactionist frame and a derived-identity theory. The central concept of the frame is "self," understood as comprised of multiple identities or internalized role expectations. Identities are taken to be determinants of social behavior, but the link between identities and behavior is seen as both facilitated and constrained by where persons are located in the social structures constituting organized society. We argued that social psychological accounts of social behavior are incomplete without tying social interaction to its structural locations. Identity theory emerged from these arguments as an explanation of variations in role choice behavior. We reported research results supporting the contention that the frame met the requirement that a frame provide testable theory.

We then noted that, to be to be useful for research purposes, a frame is necessarily limited to comparatively few concepts, and that any testable theory cannot fully comprehend complex social reality. There is good news and bad news in these observations. The good news is that these very limitations permit the research essential for sound knowledge; the bad news is that knowledge gained researching any theory will be incomplete as an explanation of social behavior. The tension between the good and the bad appears inescapable, but perhaps is open to some mitigation; and the segment of this essay offering the criterion of bridging capacity in evaluating discrete frames and theories aims at encouraging efforts in that direction.

Specifically, much of the work addressing stability and change in identities and interaction over recent decades is found in theoretically related but independent research paradigms. Stryker and Burke (2000) suggested that the challenges for identity theory were to develop research designed to address how structure and person work when multiple identities are taken into account; to develop measurement strategies that go beyond self-reported outcomes for single identities; and to further develop both greater theoretical and empirical understanding of the bases of identity. A decade later, these challenges still lie largely before us. Current research paradigms are typically built on a strategy of using the postulates and underlying logic of separate research agendas to "deepen" knowledge in a limited arena, and this may be one reason why there has been little progress in developing a broader understanding of identity processes. For example, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, social action takes place in a reflexive process of developing shared meanings from society (social structure), person (self), and others (culture). However, in work on identity, each of the available research paradigms has emphasized

one aspect of the broader interactionist frame: identity theory's (S. Stryker, 1980) focus is on the structurally based relationships to others as the dynamic that organizes behavior; ACT (Heise, 1979), drawing on Mead (1934), takes as fundamental the value of the meaning of affect accompanying behaviors derived from the cultural understandings of action in the large society; and ICT (Burke, 2004) rests on the concept of "identity standard" defined by the individual meanings persons hold representing who they are as a person. Future social psychological work on identity should see theoretical development and research that draws on the logical connections between these three related research paradigms. A more inclusive and comprehensive research agenda aimed at investigating the interrelated and reflexive nature of social structure, person, and culture and that capitalizes on the well-developed research on structural identity theory per se, affect control theory per se, and identity control theory per se would begin to broaden the understanding of how society shapes self, which shapes social interaction.

Notes

1. Burkitt (Chapter 12, this volume) locates the antecedents of the concept of identity, basic to some symbolic interactionist thought, in the writings of sixteenth-century Christian humanists like Erasmus and Rabelais. This attribution elevates the imagery of stage-like performances of actors, as in the work of Erving Goffman (1959), to preeminence in symbolic interactionism, rather than the imageries we deem more fundamental to the perspective.
2. Mead takes the terms "attitudes" and "roles" as synonyms. Contemporary sociology uses "role" as expectations for behavior attached to locations in social structures. The latter conception derives from Robert E. Park (1955): Park's work on roles bridges Mead's social psychology and current sociological conceptions of social structure, and so serves as an introduction to the development of a structural symbolic interactionism.
3. It is not clear what Kuhn had in mind in this argument. We believe it calls for a further argument like the following: role taking, for example, introduces the perspectives of others into the self of the role taker, potentially altering behavioral plans that may be different from initial plans held by either self or others. Complicating the concept of self as Kuhn does here makes it infinitely more difficult to develop theories implicating self and conducting sound tests of those theories. Nevertheless, Kuhn's methodological stance, in contrast to Blumer's, is oriented to the requirements of sound social science.
4. The foregoing rephrases the general symbolic interactionist account of social behavior for the special case of unacquainted persons who come together to deal with a task. While the process described here can be benign, used only to allow the interaction to proceed smoothly, it can also be used, deliberately or otherwise, to shape another's behavior in ways that benefit the shaper. The later possibility, labeled behavioral confirmation, has long been recognized by psychologists (Snyder & Swann, 1976, 1978) as well as by sociologists who describe it as involving altercasting (Weinstein & Deutschberger, 1963, 1964), that is, cueing role behaviors in others that lead the others to behave as we wish or expect them to behave.
5. The assumption underlying random assignment from a pool of potential student participants in experiments to treatment conditions is that doing so "equates" the early experiences of the participants and rules out possible systematic differences among participants assigned to experimental conditions in explaining experimental findings.
6. Some theorists, for example, Prentice, Miller, and Lightdale (1994) recognize the distinction. Failure to do so holds a danger, namely, that the qualities and significance of "groups" (in the sociological sense) may too easily

be imputed to categories without empirical justification. Alternatively put, categories are often, perhaps typically, more heterogeneous on a variety of scores than are groups, if only by virtue of their size, and greater unity may be imputed to them than in fact exists.

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